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FOR ACTION

COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY NOTE**

Chile

SUMMARY

The Executive Director presents the country programme strategy note for Chile for a programme of cooperation for the period 1997 to 2001.

The process of democratic renewal in Chile has generated a favourable climate for the defense of human rights, and the Government ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. The country has achieved most of the goals for the decade related to child survival and development, although there are significant regional disparities. Poverty still affects 2 million children - 40 per cent of the child population - who suffer different forms of inequality and discrimination in health, education and protection. Past UNICEF cooperation was planned in a period of political uncertainty, with financial restrictions in the social sector. This led to a fragmented programme with a great number of activities without a strong framework. To enhance the impact of UNICEF cooperation, priorities, therefore, should reflect relevant, important issues related to child rights, focusing interventions for the most vulnerable groups.

The national goals which relate most closely to child well-being are the consolidation of democracy and the eradication of poverty to ensure social and geographic equity. The country programme aims to inform and sensitize Chilean society about the rights of children and to promote the coordination of actions to reduce significant social disparities. The strategies will include advocacy about the situation of children and increased information and knowledge on child rights for families, government institutions and civil society, as well as capacity-building of state institutions.

* E/ICEF/1996/2.

** An addendum to the present report containing the final country programme recommendation will be submitted to the Executive Board for approval at its third regular session of 1996.

THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN

1. During the period 1990 to 1995, democracy was re-established and economic growth combined with social justice and political stability became primary political objectives in Chile. However, the country's spectacular economic growth, which has averaged 7 per cent, has not benefited all equally. Income disparities are widening, with 10 per cent of the population receiving 45 per cent of the gross domestic product. Poverty continues to be a serious problem, especially for rural, indigenous groups, and 30 per cent of the population of 13 million still live under the poverty line. Some 5 million people are under 18 years of age, of whom 2 million, or 40 per cent, live in poverty. Poor children suffer different forms of inequality and discrimination, the most important being poor quality health and education services. This results in low performance rates and high repetition rates in public and state-subsidized schools.

2. The return to democracy has generated a favourable climate for the defense of human rights. The Government of Chile ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, submitting its first report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1992. The Committee observed that poverty still affects a large number of children and constrains implementation of the provisions of the Convention. The process for adapting national legislation to comply with the Convention is still at an initial stage. Current legislation discriminates against poor children and adolescents by confining them to institutions under provisions for special protection of abandoned and battered children, or as juvenile delinquents.

3. Chile has made a breakthrough in child survival and, in fact, has already achieved all of the goals set by the World Summit for Children except those for universal access to clean water and sanitation and the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, both of which are expected to be achieved by the year 2000. However, wide regional disparities remain.

4. As a result of this progress, problems concerning children's rights with respect to protection have become more visible. The national plan of action (NPA) includes goals on child battering, sexual abuse, adolescent pregnancies, drug and alcohol abuse and the degradation of the environment. Achieving those goals by the year 2000 will require special efforts because some problems have not been adequately assessed and, in general, issues of child participation have not yet been addressed by the country. Children and adolescents lack opportunities to participate within the family, schools and in society at large.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM PAST COOPERATION

5. The last country programme was planned in a period of transition to democracy marked by financial constraints with respect to social services. Limited opportunities for programme cooperation led to a number of small sectoral activities without a common framework. Future UNICEF cooperation should address important issues related to child rights, focusing on capacity-building and the empowerment of children, families and communities, primarily in the most vulnerable geographic areas.

6. The competence of UNICEF is recognized with regard to children in especially difficult circumstances, early childhood development and preschool and basic education. Continuing innovative applied research on these topics, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), universities, private and public institutions, should be a priority for UNICEF.

7. The NPA and corresponding regional plans of action for children still present a sectoral and fragmented view of the situation of children and adolescents, based on a concept of needs rather than rights. Hence, an in-depth revision of the NPA should transform it into a rights-based advocacy instrument. The process of introducing the NPA at the municipal level offers a great opportunity to coordinate sectoral efforts at local levels and renew commitments for children's rights, including financial ones, using a more holistic approach.

8. The lack of a coherent communication strategy resulted in activities with a weak relationship to the programme activities, which has been a draw-back to increasing private sector fund-raising. A more viable long-term strategy should be designed to effectively reach and sensitize the public about children's rights.

PROPOSED COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY

9. The national goals which relate most closely to children's well-being are the consolidation of democracy, the eradication of poverty to ensure social and geographic equity, increased coverage and quality in education for all children, and decentralization to promote effective family and community participation. Those goals, together with the analysis of the situation of children, adolescents and women and the lessons learned from past cooperation, provide the basis for a country programme aimed at informing and sensitizing Chilean society about the rights of children and adolescents, and at coordinating actions to reduce geographical and social disparities.

10. Based on Chile's national goals, the objectives of the country programme are (a) to create awareness about the situation of children and adolescents in Chile and increase knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (b) to support the country in harmonizing relevant national legislation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (c) to assist in the revision and monitoring of the NPA and in the development of local plans of action; (d) to support improvements in the quality of basic education, especially for vulnerable social and geographical groups; and (e) to promote gender equality.

11. The strategies to be used are advocacy about the situation of children and adolescents and on the contents of the Convention which address children, adolescents, families, government institutions and civic organizations. The participation of children and adolescents will be encouraged, especially in the family and the school system, as will their expression of opinions on subjects of importance to them. Capacity-building, through technical assistance and training, will assist central and local government and state institutions responsible for implementing the NPA and those involved in harmonizing national legislation with the provisions of the Convention. The empowerment of parents and communities will be promoted through training in early childhood development and positive parenting behaviour. A gender perspective will be included in the country programme, which will pursue special activities for the empowerment of girls. Monitoring and evaluation of the country programme will focus on gender indicators.

12. Because a large number of children in Chile are victims of discrimination, the first programme component will help to overcome poverty, contribute to the reduction of discrimination and promote the coordination of efforts to implement children's rights, with special emphasis on actions to reduce inequalities affecting children. UNICEF will support the process of adapting all relevant legislation to the Convention and the subsequent application of the resulting

laws. This support will include technical assistance and training for the Ministry of Justice, parliamentarians and judges. The programme will aim to raise public awareness of the need for and importance of legislative reform. UNICEF will work closely with the National Service for Children (Servicio Nacional de Menores (SENAME)) in designing a programme to de-institutionalize children and to provide alternative forms of care for children requiring special protection. This process will include a revision of all SENAME internal norms and mechanisms in the light of the principles and provisions of the Convention.

13. UNICEF will provide technical assistance for revision of the NPA, in addition to training on the contents of the Convention to all state institutions responsible for its implementation. A second endeavour will include the development of municipal plans of action, focusing on the most vulnerable geographic and ethnic groups of children. The programme will promote the participation of local institutions, community-based organizations and NGOs to coordinate actions and generate results. In this process, children's demands will be considered. Important partners in this effort will include mayors, especially the Chilean Network of Mayors as Defenders of Children, and the group of Parliamentarians for Children. To ensure commitment by all sectors of society, the development of local plans of action will be complemented by a sensitization campaign based on the rights of the child. Furthermore, funds will be mobilized from the private sector. The goals of the NPA and the World Summit for Children will be monitored.

14. The Government considers improvements in education to be the key element of poverty reduction and the reinforcement of democracy. Activities related to early childhood development will include parental education on early stimulation and positive parenting. For preschool education, there will be an emphasis on the empowerment of parents and teachers with new methodological approaches to integrated child development, promoting the rights of participation and expression of children. For basic education, the programme will promote past experiences of using innovative methodologies, elaborated in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and which complement programmes of the Ministry of Education, to improve quality, especially in the most vulnerable municipalities. Education for development and environmental education will be promoted. Special studies and activities will be carried out to identify and eliminate ethnic, socio-economic and gender inequalities within the formal school system. In all activities, there will be special emphasis on the potential of local networks and of the experiences of community organizations to empower these groups.

15. There will be systematic analysis of regional and local social statistics using conventional and non-conventional indicators, including a gender perspective, to increase knowledge of the situation of children and adolescents in the country. There will be special studies and research on such topics as child battering, sexual abuse, drug abuse, child labour, AIDS and other emerging issues. The opinions of children and adolescents on the problems affecting them will be of great importance. This work will be carried out in collaboration with government groups, NGOs, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Population Fund, UNESCO and other United Nations agencies.

16. The second programme component, for advocacy, communication and social mobilization, will support achievement of the objectives of the first component. It will focus on disseminating the Convention on the Rights of the Child to children, adolescents and families as well as to the general public. Sensitizing the public about the situation of children and adolescents in Chile will be a mobilization tool to create awareness and build alliances for the

defense and promotion of children's rights. Special activities to promote children's and adolescents' participation will be carried out through the programme. Local funds will be sought to finance activities within the country programme. To date, there have been successful experiences in mobilizing funds from the private sector to finance activities to improve the quality of education.

ESTIMATED PROGRAMME BUDGET

Estimated programme cooperation, 1997-2001 a/
(In thousands of United States dollars)

	General resources	Supplementary funds	Total
Overcoming poverty	3 300	550	3 850
Advocacy, communication and social mobilization	1 700	200	1 900
Total	5 000	750	5 750

a/ These are indicative figures only which are subject to change once aggregate financial data are finalized.